

Literacy Requirements for the High Risk Work Licences (HRWLs)

In order to successfully complete the assessment requirements for a HRWL, participants must complete a Knowledge Assessment (written component of the assessment test). Participants who have literacy issues, but are otherwise skilled and knowledgeable in operating the machines, might find it difficult or impossible to pass the assessment because of issues with reading the test and providing written responses.

A number of training organisations have sought clarification about this issue from WorkSafe WA, which is the government body responsible for issuing the HRWL.

WorkSafe WA has provided clear instructions to training organisations about the literacy requirements for the written assessment component of the HRWLs. WorkSafe WA has advised that:

Regulation 6.20(2)(d) of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 requires that an assessor must not issue a notice of satisfactory assessment (NOA) unless satisfied that the applicant for the HRWL has sufficient knowledge of the English language, both written and oral, to safely do the work relevant to the HRWL applied for.

WorkSafe considers that to assist in ensuring safety at the workplace, and to comply with the above regulatory requirement, applicants for a HRWL must have sufficient knowledge of the English language to communicate orally with other workers and where appropriate be able to read and understand:

- ***Safety signs at workplaces***
- ***Operator manuals in the case of plant such as, for example, forklift trucks, work platforms and cranes.***
- ***Load charts and/or compliance plates in the case of plant as exemplified above***
- ***Assembly instructions and drawings associated with rigging and scaffolding work***
- ***Job Safety Analyses (JSAs)***

In undertaking the written component of the Assessment Instrument, WorkSafe does not permit, under any circumstances, an interpreter to be used and requires that applicants attempt the written examination in their own hand.

Being able to write answers to the written questions is an essential means of applicants demonstrating to the assessor that they can read the English language. However, when marking written assessments assessors can seek verbal clarification/enhancement of questions not fully answered.

WorkSafe also wishes to confirm that all written assessments for HRWLs must be 'closed book' in that applicants must not have access to any information, such as course text books or other learning material that will assist them in providing answers to the Assessment Instrument questions.

We appreciate that this can be difficult for people from non-English speaking backgrounds and those with reading and writing issues to meet the WorkSafe requirements and we are committed to making whatever reasonable adjustments we can. However, we must always comply fully with the WorkSafe WA requirements which are designed to ensure the safety of workplaces where high-risk activities are being undertaken.